



# KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **BOARD REAFFIRMS TUITION FREEZE COMMITMENT**

### *Tuition Freeze Contingent Upon Legislature's Final Budget Decision*

(TOPEKA) – Today the Kansas Board of Regents again expressed its desire to assist hard-working students and their families during this difficult economic time by reaffirming its commitment to freeze state university tuition costs for Kansas residents for the upcoming 2009-2010 academic year.

“Because of the Legislature’s higher education appropriation and the Governor’s veto of restrictive budgetary provisos, the Board is still in a position to freeze tuition for Kansas students,” said Regent Donna Shank, Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents. “Of course the budgetary process is still ongoing, but, given where things stand today, we are thankful we are in a position to help hard-working students and their families in this tough economy.”

Today the Board unanimously approved a motion reaffirming its commitment to its March 12 plan to freeze tuition for Kansas residents for the upcoming academic year if: 1) there are no further budget cuts, 2) the Governor’s recent veto of restrictive budgetary provisos is sustained, and 3) no additional unfunded budgetary mandates are imposed. In addition, the Board strongly urged the Legislature to delay the imposition of unfunded obligations (such as mandated, but unfunded, increases in salary and longevity payments) that are currently contained within the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. These mandates operate to deepen the already-significant budget cuts that the state universities must absorb.

On March 12 the Board approved a state university tuition freeze plan that would be possible if: 1) the Legislature limits Fiscal Year 2010 higher education budget reductions to no more than 7%, and 2) the State receives higher education-related funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which the Board could allocate for both campus deferred maintenance projects and tuition cost mitigation (for the state universities, the Board’s plan would allocate 100% of FY 2009 and 67% of FY 2010 funding for deferred maintenance projects). The Legislature ultimately approved a Fiscal Year 2010 budget that included a higher education budget reduction of approximately 7% (an approximate \$63 million cut). The budget also included provisos that would have restricted the Board’s use of ARRA funds by mandating that those funds be allocated for deferred maintenance projects only. However, Governor Sebelius vetoed those restrictive budgetary provisos on April 13.

“Trying to balance the state’s budget in such a difficult economic environment is certainly no easy task, but I do applaud the careful and thoughtful work conducted thus far by the Legislature,” said Shank. “At this point in time, the state’s higher education system will be affected by a 7% or \$63 million cut which will have a serious impact on our institutions.

However, we do understand that every state governmental entity must share in the pain in times like these and we are prepared to do that. The economy has put the Legislature in a tough position, but I truly appreciate that the Legislature recognizes the important role higher education will play in returning Kansas to prosperity.”

The Board will make a final decision on the proposed tuition freeze during either its May or June meeting.

The following table outlines the amount of State General Fund (SGF) support for the state’s higher education system (7 public universities, 19 community colleges, and 6 technical colleges):

| HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM SUPPORT (SGF)   |  |
|---|--|
| FY 2008:  | \$829 million (actual expenditures)                                    |
| FY 2009:  | \$853 million (original appropriation)                                 |
| FY 2009 (revised):  | \$817 million (4.25% or \$36 million reduction from FY 2009 original)* |
| FY 2010:  | \$790 million (7% or \$63 million reduction from FY 2009 original)**   |
| *Reflects February Budget Rescission  |  |
| **Reflects Budget Approved by the Legislature and Signed Into Law by the Governor |  |

The following table outlines unfunded mandates that the state universities are currently expected to absorb:

| STATE UNIVERSITY UNFUNDED BUDGETARY MANDATES             |             |
|--|-------------|
| <i>FY 2010 Estimated Increases</i>                       |             |
| 1% Classified Staff Salary Increase, Including Benefits: | \$1,036,600 |
| Classified Staff Under-Market Salary Adjustments:        | \$3,954,700 |
| Classified Staff Longevity Payments:                     | \$1,721,200 |
| Total:   | \$6,712,500 |

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***About the Kansas Board of Regents:***

The nine-member Kansas Board of Regents is the governing board of the state’s six universities and the statewide coordinating board for the state’s 32 public higher education institutions (six state universities, a municipal university, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges). In addition, the Board administers the state’s student financial aid, adult education, GED, and career and technical education programs. The Board also authorizes private proprietary schools and out-of-state institutions to operate in Kansas, and administers the Kan-ed network, a statewide network that provides broadband Internet access and distance learning capabilities for schools, hospitals, and libraries.

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